Accordingly, CCI has undertaken price suppot operation and made purchases to the extent of 7772 bales of kapas from 29.11.99 to 28.1.2000.

Production of Truffle

*317. SHRI ANIL SHARMA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the quantity of truffle (a kind of hilly vegetable) produced in hilly States, including Himachal Pradesh, during the last five years, State-wise;

(b) whether Government have evolved or introduced any technical method of its production; if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) whether the same is being exported; if so, to which countries and what foreign exchange has been earned during the said period, year-wise?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SUNDAR LAL PATWA): (a) Truffle, a subterranean edible mushroom is not being cultivated in India. Some stray reports of its occurrence in forests are there but no organised collection is taking place.

(b) No, Sir. Its production technology has neither been evolved nor introduced in the country so far.

(c) Since no cultivation or organised collection of truffle is being practiced in the country, there is no possibility of its export for the present.

Posting of Envoys

*318. SHRI RAMACHANDRAIAH RUMANDLA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the manner in which postings of our envoys are decided;

(b) whether merit is the sole criteria for selection of suitable candidates; and

(c) if so, the reasons for envoys flocking to Delhi for lobbying for their postings and get plum posts?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) and (b) The postings of envoys abroad are decided on the basis of a number of considerations which include, *inter alia*, their seniority, career, relevant experience and an overall suitability for the tasks and the post.

(c) Indian envoys from abroad are required to visit the Headquarters of the